sold. The paddies of the average farmer in Siaton and Zamboanguita are so small that they cannot produce sufficient rice to last the families through the year. About 23 per cent of the cultivated land is also occupied by coconut palms. In Pamplona is one of the largest coconut plantations in Negros; it is owned and managed by Americans. Generally, however, coconut plantings vary from 5 to 15 acres and are owned by Filipinos. Many families have a few coconut trees that provide their chief cash income. Coconut palms usually appear along the littoral where the sandy soils are too well-drained for other crops and the internal drainage from the Central Mountain range favors coconut cultivation. Coconuts, however, are frequently planted along field boundaries and extend toward the interior of many parts of this region.

Coconut palms begin to bear as early as five years after planting and often produce nuts when a century old. The Laguna variety is common in this region; it is an early-bearing tree that usually produces nuts after eight or ten years. The fresh coconut meat is dried under the sun or in crude, smoky ovens, tapahans. The dried meat is known as copra and is the chief export of Dumaguete port; in 1951 it amounted to more than $5,000,000. The prosperity of this region is closely tied to copra prices. When prices are high, for example, enrollment in both public and private schools rises; but when copra prices fall school enrollments decrease

4

20: Hart E-5 (1951) 1954 QA1 Philippines
Central Bisayan QA14

175*
871

Siaton Schools During the Spanish Period

Prior to 1863 there was no systematic educational structure or administration in the Philippines. "The government did not have any agency for the control and supervision of the schools. Each school was left to its own devices--to choose its teachers, to adopt its curriculum, to administer its own affairs according to the desire of the founders.[104] The royal decree of 1863 extended to the Philippines a school system originally developed for Cuba and provided for "incomplete" primary schools in each barrio of 500 persons or less. The supervision of local schools was given to the parish priests. Two years later the organization of secondary schools, one in each province, was also decreed.[105]

175*
872
346

There had been a school, for boys and girls, in Siaton for several decades before 1890 but the Cadiane manuscript does not go into detail. In 1891, however, Baldomores Torres, the Guardia Civil commandant, decided

---

[104] "The parish priest, as ex-officio supervisor, had the following functions: to visit the schools, to admonish erring teachers or to suspend them, to encourage attendance of pupils, to certify whether a child should be admitted to the school, free of charge or not, to recommend to the provincial inspector any needed improvement of the school, and to supervise the teaching of religion and morals." Isidro Antonio, The Philippine Educational System. 2nd ed. Manila, Bookman, Inc., 1949, pp. 9-10.

[105] Katherine M. Cook, Public Education in the Philippine Islands, Bulletin 1935, No. 9, Washington, D. C. U. S. Department of the Interior, Office of Education, 1935, p. 22.